



## PMC's Drama in Mali Tackles the Myths and Stigma About Disability



*If 'Jigi ma Tignè' had been broadcast when I was 18 months old, I would have not been the object of rejection, exclusion, and marginalization, because my parents and everyone else would have understood that I am not a bad luck omen and that I have the same rights as other children. And I would have gone to school like the other kids.*

- Ténimba, a listener to PMC's program in Mali

Ténimba with her daughter

Photo by PMC Mali

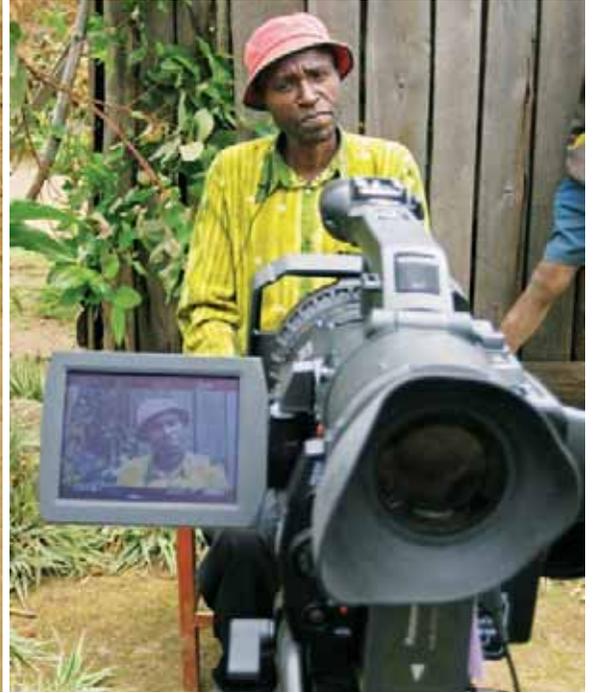
Today, it is estimated that roughly 10% of people living in developing countries are disabled. People with disabilities are not only faced with the challenges presented by their condition, but are often confronted with discrimination in the community, the workplace, and even among family and friends.

To help create a culture of support and acceptance for those people living with disabilities, PMC produced and broadcast the radio serial drama, *Jigi ma Tignè*, ("Hope Is Allowed"). The 74-episode radio serial drama, which was aired over the national broadcast channel and 50 community radio stations throughout Mali, also addressed family planning, HIV/AIDS, women's empowerment, and the harmful traditional practice of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). One of the benefits of PMC's method is that it is able to address a wide array of issues and have an impact on each one.

The drama quickly became a mainstay in the lives of millions throughout Mali and even beyond Mali's borders. The storyline on disability has helped to uplift those living with disabilities and reduce the stigma associated with having a disability. This is the story of one woman's life that is forever changed.

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## Listeners React to PMC's Program in Rwanda



*After listening [to 'Umurage Urukwiye'] and learning about the importance of the environment, I have planted some avocado and mango trees, and some are at the stage that they have flowers.*

*The government had decided that we should plant trees...I did that. I did that because they advised us to do that. But later, after listening to the program, I now got to know the value of a tree, that it stops soil erosion. And I started to water trees. Even though I may not be around, I will instruct my kids or whoever is at home to water the trees, because now I understand the value of trees.*

- Two listeners share what they learned from listening to PMC's Program, *Umurage Urukwiye* ("Rwanda's Brighter Future")

Rwanda is the most densely populated country in Africa and it continues to grow at an alarming rate. Rwanda's population growth, combined with widespread clear cutting practices, is resulting in massive soil erosion, thus degrading the land that millions rely on for survival and threatening the habitat of the now-endangered mountain gorilla. There are only about **600 mountain gorillas left in the world!** Since they cannot survive in captivity, protecting their habitat is vital to their survival.

To address these issues, PMC produced and broadcast a radio serial drama called *Umurage Urukwiye* ("Rwanda's Brighter Future"). Because of its highly entertaining content and its relevance to daily life, *Umurage Urukwiye*, seized the attention of millions throughout the country. As *Umurage Urukwiye* was nearing its conclusion, a team of PMC staff visited Rwanda to learn how the drama impacted the lives of the listeners.

Listeners were eager to convey how much they liked the program. In Ruhengeri, one woman said she stops whatever

she is doing so that she can listen to the program. Another woman explained that she is the only one among her friends who has a radio, so she calls her friends to her home every time the program is on, so they can listen to the program together.

Other listeners explained what they learned from the program:

*I have learned a lot of things from 'Umurage Urukwiye.' I can mention some things, such as protecting the environment, family planning, and fighting against HIV/AIDS, and gender equality.*

*I was ready to have a wife and to be married. But after listening to 'Umurage Urukwiye,' I realized that I have to prepare and have some time to think about it. And I will look for a wife when I'm prepared.*

*From Mimi's example, I learned that I cannot be forced into marriage, because Mimi resisted her mother who tried to force her into marriage. As a young girl, I learned that I have the right to choose my right partner – not to be forced to marry anybody.*

## Population Experts Flood the Airwaves

### Connecting Population to the Most Important Issues of Our Time

The following is an excerpt from an interview with Dr. Malcolm Potts and Leon Kolankiewicz, featured on the radio station KGNU Colorado on September 4, 2009 as part of Population Media Center's Population News Strategy.

**Interviewer:** *Your book is about how biology explains war and terrorism. What does population have to do with your work and interests?*

**Dr. Malcolm Potts, Bixby Professor of Population and Family Planning, University of California, Berkeley:** *Okay, we are looking outside the United States and the fighting in Afghanistan and that is where some of our troops sadly are dying. But those wars tend to occur in countries with rapid population growth, where those people are competing for resources, and particularly when you have lots of young men, [aged] 15-30, who often have no job opportunities, and in Afghanistan they are not educated, and they are very angry and they do violent things.*

*I have worked in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Gaza Strip and places like that, and I think one of the solutions to make the world a more peaceful place is to ensure that the women in these countries can choose whether and when to have a child. Because unless we can give them that freedom, then there is no point in pretending that we are going to give them freedom to become a democracy or stable nation or anything else. We have to focus on women first and their freedom and other things will fall into place.*

....

**Interviewer:** *Leon, your work really focuses on wilderness and U.S. natural resources, and I am not really sure how this ties into population growth. Can you tell us a little bit about your concerns concerning the environment and the growing U.S. population?*

**Leon Kolankiewicz, author and wildlife biologist:** *... The focus of my work in the past has been on U.S. population growth, both domestically, as in the United States, and the impact of a growing number of Americans on the global environment, such as our rising green house gas emissions. Just to set the stage, in this country, we are growing now by more than 3 million people a year. In the 1990s, we grew by something like 32 to 33 million people – the largest decade of growth in U.S. history, since they started keeping tabs in the 1790s or thereabouts. And this added 30 million people all have an impact on the environment. We are all consumers. We are all using land to give us places to work, to play in, to recreate, to go to school in. We are consuming resources and producing waste. Even those of us, such as yours truly, that try to live more efficiently and lighter on the earth, reducing our so-called ecological footprint, have an impact.*

To hear the complete interview, visit our website ([www.populationmedia.org/where/united\\_states/population-news-strategy/population-interviews/](http://www.populationmedia.org/where/united_states/population-news-strategy/population-interviews/)) where you will find more than 45 population focused interviews. We are adding new interviews every week. Stay current on one of the most important issues of our time by subscribing to our population podcasts today!

To date, PMC's Population News Strategy has resulted in more than **88 hours of media interviews dedicated to population**. The project began about one year ago with the purpose of bringing the issue of population back into the media and in the forefront of the American public by placing population and sustainability experts on radio talk show programs across the United States. Our purpose has been to educate the public, encourage their activism and change the terms of the sustainability debate to include the idea that stabilized global and U.S. populations are necessary prerequisites of bona fide sustainability.

To date, we have placed **26 experts on more than 180 separate radio talk show programs**, which has led to **more than 1000 syndicated broadcasts** in a variety of media markets all over the United States. These markets have ranged from small town, rural America to major metropolitan markets. In addition to broadcasting on traditional radio outlets, the majority of these programs are also being streamed or archived online, further extending the reach and impact of such programs. Our stories have also been picked up by major environmental internet portals such as [Treehugger.com](http://Treehugger.com) and [GreenerOz.net](http://GreenerOz.net). PMC has also created a "Best Of" library on our website.

To ensure our success, we arm our expert guests with up-to-date talking points about population's impact on environment and society, suggestions for performing well during live interviews, and themes we would like them to stress during their particular show. Then we let them go to work, giving color to the issues at hand, expressing their own unique viewpoints and, often, engaging with live call-ins and spontaneous debates and discussions.

Most important, we've been flexible and innovative in our approach. We've responded in real-time to important news events like the Global Population Speak Out, Nadya Suleman's octuplets, Earth Day, World Population Day, and even Florida's recent population decline. By reacting quickly to the news cycle and offering talk show hosts expert guests appropriate to the topic at hand, we can, in turn, influence the news cycle itself.

We would like to thank all of our expert guests, and all of the great radio talk show hosts and producers who have been willing to explore the critical sustainability issue of human population with us.

## MALI: Ténimba's Story continued from page 1

When Ténimba was 18 months old, she was afflicted by polio, which left her paralyzed. By the age of 10, Ténimba had lost both her parents. As a disabled orphan, Ténimba was deprived of basic care, opportunities for education, and was excluded from any family or community life. She grew up on the margins of society. At age 17, Ténimba was raped by her cousin and became pregnant. Her cousin died soon after, but had denied the child until his death. With no resources or support, Ténimba was left to raise her child alone.

*If 'Jigi ma Tignè' had been broadcast when I was 17 years old, I would not have had an unwanted pregnancy, because I would have known how to protect myself.*

*....Today, I don't consider myself to be society's garbage any more, and I won't let others treat me like garbage.*

*....I have the same story as Dado, and I don't see any reason that I can't succeed, just like she has been able to succeed. I now have a positive self-image, and I am sure that others have a positive image of us disabled people because of Dado's example. I feel that others look at me differently now, and that gives me hope to go forward.*

- Ténimba



Photo by PMC Mali

After spending years struggling to provide for herself and her daughter and living as an outcast in her village, Ténimba decided to leave her native village of Samantra to stay with her older sister in another village. While living with her sister, Ténimba listened to *Jigi ma Tignè* and was inspired by the character, Dado. Dado was also disabled, yet through perseverance and community support, she was able to open up her own boutique. Dado's character demonstrated that despite the additional challenges she is faced with in life because of her disability, she can contribute to society and lead a positive life. Through Dado's strength and perseverance, the audience learned that people living with disabilities can make positive contributions to society. The program also emphasized the importance of providing all people – even those with disabilities – with opportunity and support, and that all people, including those with disabilities, have basic human rights that must be upheld.

Inspired by Dado, Ténimba decided to pursue her dream of owning her own hair salon. She has enrolled her daughter in school and hopes to give her a better life. Ténimba also plans to form an association of disabled female entrepreneurs.

To develop the storyline that dealt with issues surrounding disability, PMC worked in partnership with the Malian Federation of Associations of Handicapped Persons (FEMAPH) and Trickle Up, a U.S. based organization that helps to provide micro credit to people living with disabilities around the world.

PMC's work in Mali is funded by USAID, the Wallace Global Fund, the Jewish Communal Fund, and an individual contributor.

## *On the Air*

Country/Region	Program Name	Format	Broadcaster
Brazil	<i>Various Programs</i>	Television Dramas	TV Globo
Ethiopia	<i>Sibrat</i> (“Trauma”)	Radio Drama	National Service of Radio Ethiopia FM Addis 97.1
Ethiopia	<i>Alegnta</i> (“Security”)	Radio Talk Show	National Service of Radio Ethiopia
Ethiopia (Afar region)	<i>Naedetai</i> (“Let’s Stop”)	Radio Magazine	National Service of Radio Ethiopia
Ethiopia (Somali region)	<i>Igaddaa</i> (“We Do Not Want It Anymore”)	Radio Magazine	National Service of Radio Ethiopia
Mali	<i>Jigi ma Tignè</i> (“Hope Is Allowed”)	Radio Drama	ORTM Radio Mali (National and Regional) & 50 community stations
Nigeria	<i>Ruwan Dare</i> (“Midnight Rain”)	Radio Drama	FRCN Kaduna, FRCN Katsina, Rima Radio, & Freedom Radio
Senegal	<i>Ngelawu Nawet</i> (“Winds of Hope”)	Radio Drama	Radiodiffusion Television Senegalaise (RTS) National
Senegal (Matam region)	<i>Coñal Keele</i>	Radio Drama	Radiodiffusion Television Senegalaise (RTS) Matam
Vietnam	<i>Khat Vong Song</i> (“The Desire of Life”)	Radio Drama	Voice of Vietnam (VOV1, VOV2, & VOV3)

### **PMC Welcomes Thato Ratsebe, Development and Communications Assistant to the President**



Thato recently completed a Master of Science in Administration and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication, both from Saint Michael’s College in Vermont. After receiving her degree, she worked at the Population Reference Bureau in planning an international conference.

Originally from Botswana, she received training in the Sabido methodology from Population Media Center as a writer and was involved in a CDC-run radio serial drama project there focused on raising awareness of the personal and community costs of HIV/AIDS and how to prevent it and other sexually transmitted diseases. She has served as a host of radio programs in both Botswana and Vermont. As a radio producer and presenter in Vermont, Thato worked with the Association of Africans Living in Vermont to advocate for the new population in the area. She featured local service providers, community members, and new refugees in her radio program to discuss social and cultural issues faced by the new community. She also served as coordinator for Vermont Public Television’s participation in a yearlong campaign of the Global Health Council, “Rx for Child Survival,” to highlight the treatment of childhood illnesses in America and around the world.



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Population Media Center (PMC) works worldwide using entertainment-education for social change. PMC's programs encourage positive behavior change among the audience.

<http://www.populationmedia.org>

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Help us change the world today,  
so they can have a brighter tomorrow.